

LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY FOR:

December 15, 2003

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LAST WEEK

LEGISLATION OF NOTE

The following Bills of significance to NRCS and conservation have been introduced:

| Bill | Sponsor | Purpose |
|---------|-------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| S. 1910 | Wyden, OR | To direct the Secretary of Agriculture to carry out an inventory and management program for forests derived from public domain land. |
| S. 1938 | Corzine, NJ | To amend the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974 and related laws to strengthen the protection of native biodiversity and ban clear cutting on Federal land. |

CONGRESS ADJOURNS WITH NO ACTION ON THE OMNIBUS SPENDING

BILL – On December 9, 2003, the Senate debated the fiscal year 2004 Omnibus Appropriations Bill (H. Rpt. 108-401), but adjourned without taking action on the spending package. The House had passed the legislation the day before by a vote of 242-176, this bill includes the Agriculture appropriations along with six other spending measures. Congress will reconvene January 20, 2004, for the second session of the 108th Congress, and debate is expected to continue.

The Federal government will continue operations at current levels under H.J. Res. 79 through January 31, 2004.

REP. JOE SKEEN - Joe Skeen, 76, former House Representative of New Mexico's District 2, died of Parkinson's Disease on December 7, 2003 in Roswell, NM. He served as the Chairman of the House Appropriations subcommittee on the Interior, which sets the budget for national parks, federal land agencies and government Indian programs. He had served the people of New Mexico for 22 years when he announced that he would not seek reelection. He was elected to Congress in 1980 as a write-in and served longer than any other representative from that state.

108th Congress Schedule for 2004

Senate

| | |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| January 20 | Senate reconvenes |
| January 20 | Martin Luther King Holiday |
| January 21 | State of the Union Address |
| February 16 - 23 | President's Day Recess |
| March 15 - 19 | Senate Recess |
| April 12-19 | Spring Recess |
| May 24 - 31 | Memorial Day Recess |
| June 28 - July 5 | Independence Day Recess |
| July 26 - September 6 | Summer Recess |
| October 1 | Target Adjournment |

House

| | |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| January 20 | House reconvenes |
| January 20 | Martin Luther King Holiday |
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LOOKING AHEAD

SPECIALTY CROPS – The Energy Policy, Natural Resources and Regulatory Affairs Subcommittee (Rep. Ose, CA, Chair) of the House Government Reform Committee will hold a field hearing on the problems facing the specialty crop industry. “Specialty Crops” are defined as fruits, vegetables, nuts and the processed products made from them. The hearing will be held at the National Steinbeck Center, One Main Street, Salinas, CA.

December 12

10:00 a.m.

Salinas, CA

COLORADO WATER SUPPLY – The Water and Power Subcommittee (Rep. Calvert, CO, Chair) of the House Resources Committee will hold a field hearing on Colorado’s options to increase water supply and improve efficiencies. The hearing will be held at the Old Supreme Court Chambers, Colorado State Capitol, 200 E. Colfax Avenue, Denver, CO.

December 12

10:00 a.m.

Denver, CO
